

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 847

By Naifeh

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of John T. Bragg of Murfreesboro.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of John T. Bragg, our friend and former colleague; and

WHEREAS, a consummate professional, Mr. Bragg was an exemplary public servant and legendary legislator who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities, including a career spanning 30 years in the Tennessee House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, John Bragg served with singular grace and ability as a Representative for the 48th House District during the 84th, 85th, and 87th through the 99th General Assemblies; few lawmakers have been held in such high regard or have been so widely respected by their peers; and

WHEREAS, born May 9, 1918, in Woodbury in Cannon County, the son of the late Minor Elam and Luree Bragg, Mr. Bragg completed his primary and secondary education in the local schools; he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Science at the Middle Tennessee State College in Murfreesboro in 1940; and

WHEREAS, John Bragg was President of his Senior class at MTSU and editor of *Sidelines*, the school newspaper; he lettered in basketball, baseball, and golf and served as student government president. Years later, in 1994, the John Bragg Mass Communications Building was named in his honor; and

WHEREAS, John Bragg then undertook graduate work in History at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville; during World War II, he served 42 months in the United States Army Air Corps from 1942-46, emerging as a staff sergeant; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bragg was the editor and publisher of the *Rutherford Courier* from 1950-58 and was President of the Courier Printing Company from 1966-81; he was a member of the election commission from 1958-60 and foreman of the grand jury from 1958-66; and

WHEREAS, always willing to share his time and talent to assist his community, John Bragg was past President of the Murfreesboro Rotary Club, past President of Middle Tennessee Easter Seal, and a member of the Murfreesboro Chamber of Commerce, the Rutherford County Sportsman's Club, the Blue Raider Quarterback Club, the American Legion, the Moose Club, the Farm Bureau, the Stones River Country Club, and Kappa Alpha Court of Honor; he was the recipient of the Tennessee Press Association's Man of the Year Award in 1958, was named Distinguished Alumnus of Middle Tennessee State University in 1975, and was named Citizen of the Year by the Murfreesboro Lions Club; and

WHEREAS, first elected to the House of Representatives of the Tennessee General Assembly in the November 3, 1964, general election, John Bragg served two terms, and after a one-term hiatus, served until his retirement in 1996; and

WHEREAS, during his distinguished tenure on Capitol Hill, Mr. Bragg served on many, if not all, of the major standing, special study, and statutory committees of the House of Representatives; his knowledge and financial acumen contributed to every piece of major legislation from the Basic Education Program to the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System; and

WHEREAS, John Bragg was instrumental in establishing the institutional process, resulting in this state's reputation as one of the best managed states in the country, with the creation of the Council on Pensions and Insurance, the Fiscal Review Committee, and the Subcommittee on Revenue and Expenditures; his efforts enabled Tennessee to enjoy one of the highest bond ratings given to states and his oversight of the state retirement system resulted in the system's ranking as one of the best public pension systems in the country; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bragg did not limit his concerns to fiscal matters, but contributed to the benefit of his fellow citizens through his sponsorship of the Child Restraint Law, the Open Meetings (Sunshine) Law, the State Employee Suggestion Award Program, the Vocational-Technical Education Program, and others too numerous to mention; through the Chairs of Excellence Program, some 80 endowed chairs have been created at state universities; and

WHEREAS, a faithful alumnus and enthusiastic supporter of Middle Tennessee State University, John Bragg contributed to MTSU's growth and emergence as one of the premier educational institutions in Tennessee; he assisted in obtaining funding for a livestock center, a mass communications building, a business and aerospace department, and a new library, and was President of the MTSU Foundation in 1997-98; and

WHEREAS, long an advocate of interstate exchange and cooperation, Mr. Bragg served in every position of leadership in the National Conference of State Legislatures and was the only Tennessean to chair that organization; he played a role in the establishment of the Foundation of State Legislatures and held leadership positions in the Southern Legislative Conference and the Council of State Governments; and

WHEREAS, at the end of his legislative career, John Bragg had chaired the Finance, Ways and Means Committee since 1973, was chair of the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, and contributed his expertise and wisdom to the Fiscal Review Committee, the Committee on Children and Youth, the Oversight Committee on Education, the State Capitol Committee, the State Publications Committee, and the Information Systems Council; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bragg was named Deputy Speaker of the House for his outstanding contributions to the efficient and effective operations of the House of Representatives and his singular ability to work with all members of the House to accomplish the goals of the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, an active and devout member of the First Baptist Church of Murfreesboro, John Bragg enjoyed the loving companionship of Susan Lytle Bragg and was the proud father of sons and daughters-in-law, Tommy and Jeane Bragg, and David and Nancy Bragg; and stepchildren Elizabeth Gay Teoman, Annalee Gay and David Lytle Gay; and

WHEREAS, besides his wife and children, Mr. Bragg will be sorely missed by his sister, Mrs. Carl V. Black; his five grandchildren and three step grandchildren; the citizens of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County; and all the people of Tennessee who are the beneficiaries of his enlightened contributions to state government; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bragg leaves behind an indelible legacy of honesty, integrity, and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this truly exceptional legislator and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of our friend and former colleague, John T. Bragg, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character, his constant concern for the well being of his fellow citizens, and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Bragg.